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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-fourth year

Identical letters dated 22 May 2009 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

As Palestinians commiserate their national catastrophe of 1948 and approach the forty-second anniversary of the belligerent Israeli military occupation that continues to shackle them, Israel, the occupying Power, steps up its illegal actions of its land grab and colonization, especially in Occupied East Jerusalem. These actions have been condemned repeatedly by the international community as flagrant violations of international law, including humanitarian and human rights law. Yet, enjoying overt immunity from international accountability so far, Israel continues to take actions amounting to nothing less than a clear challenge to the norms of international relations and the will of the international community, as well as international peace and security.

In this connection, on 18 May 2009, Israel announced 20 tenders for construction in a new illegal Israeli settlement called "Maskiot" in the northern Jordan Valley in the occupied West Bank. This new illegal settlement, which would replace or be an extension of a military base, provides further evidence that settlement construction and expansion is indeed an official Israeli policy aimed at creating facts on the ground that strip Palestinians of their land and water resources. This is also evidenced by the scorching of Palestinian crops under the sun in the Jordan Valley with no access to water while illegal Israeli settlements enjoy lush green fields nearby, watered by stolen Palestinian water.

Moreover, recent Israeli media reports have revealed the extent to which the new Israeli right-wing government is determined to change the demographic and cultural identity of Occupied East Jerusalem. In the illegal Israeli settlement of "Maale Adumim", Israel has publicly announced its plans to extend this settlement in a manner which would essentially form a belt around Occupied East Jerusalem, severing it on the north, east and south from its natural Palestinian environs. This plan, which we have mentioned in our previous letters, is referred to as "E-1", and,

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together with the expansion of the existing illegal Israeli settlement "Kidar", will, de facto, annex almost 2 per cent of West Bank land.

To facilitate the implementation of this expansionist policy, Israeli occupation authorities continue to serve hundreds of Palestinian families residing in Occupied East Jerusalem with demolition and eviction orders. This policy, tantamount to ethnic cleansing, is aimed at pushing Palestinians out of Occupied East Jerusalem in order to cement an illegal policy of annexation and colonization, a policy advocated by the Prime Minister of Israel, Mr. Benjamin Netanyahu, and his government in violation of international law and relevant Security Council resolutions. In fact, just yesterday, the Israeli Prime Minister declared: "United Jerusalem is Israel's capital. Jerusalem was always ours and will always be ours. It will never again be partitioned and divided."

Furthermore, the new Israeli right-wing government has refused to commit to the will of the international community by recognizing its commitments as per the road map endorsed by the Security Council in its resolution 1515 (2003) or to the very principle of a two-State solution. On 20 May 2009, a top aide of Israel's Prime Minister called the principle "a frivolous, childish idea". It is important to state that these are not just statements, but rather a hostile ideology that translates into a further grab of Palestinian land.

Israel's persistent violations of international law and lack of commitment to peace are abundant and shockingly clear. Hence, we reiterate our appeal to the international community, embodied by the United Nations, to take a clear and unequivocal stance towards this dangerous and illegal Israeli course of action. We call on the international community, including the Security Council, to uphold its legal and moral responsibilities and obligations to bring an end to the illegal transfer and depopulation of Palestinians in Occupied East Jerusalem and to all illegal Israeli actions, and to enable the Palestinian people to exercise their inalienable rights to self-determination and to establish their sovereign and viable Palestinian State, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The present letter is in follow-up to our previous 339 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 30 April 2009 (A/ES-10/454-S/2009/228), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the text of the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Dr. Riyad Mansour
Ambassador
Permanent Observer

Palestine, is being gravely undermined. Palestinian lives and rights are being detrimentally impacted, daily and grossly, and the prospects for realizing the two-State solution for peace on the basis of the 1967 borders are being deliberately sabotaged. Tensions between the two sides continue to escalate and a resumption of the peace process continues to be obstructed by Israel's intransigent insistence on pursuit of this illegal colonization campaign, which seriously casts doubt on Israel's credibility in and commitment to the peace process.

As repeatedly stressed by the Palestinian leadership, a complete cessation of Israeli settlement activities — a "settlement freeze" — is fundamental for ensuring that no further harm is done to the Palestinian Territory and by extension to Palestinian national aspirations, as well as to the two-State solution for peace, on which there exists a firm international consensus. The peace process will continue to stumble, stall and fail as long as Israel continues to carry out actions that are in direct contradiction to the core objective of that process and to the main principle sustaining that process, namely the principle of land for peace. A return to the peace process negotiations under such conditions would be totally futile.

Accordingly, I wish to draw your attention to just a few of the most recent Israeli violations in this regard and to renew the call of the Palestinian leadership for action by the international community to bring an end to this illegal colonization of the Palestinian land and salvage the prospects for achieving a just and peaceful resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict:

- On 1 July 2009, demolition orders were issued to another seven Palestinian families in Occupied East Jerusalem, in the Wadi Hilwa neighbourhood of Silwan, a day after the demolition of a Palestinian home on the Mount of Olives rendered another 15 Palestinians homeless and resulted in the injury of several civilians by the occupying forces.

- Also on 1 July 2009, dozens of Israeli settlers took over farmland in Kafr al-Labad village near the city of Tulkarem, erecting tents there with the intention of establishing yet another illegal so-called settlement "outpost".

- On 29 June 2009, it was reported that Israel had approved the construction of another 50 units in the "Adam" settlement, north of Occupied East Jerusalem, in order to "re-settle" settlers to be removed from the nearby "Migron outpost". These new units are also reported to be part of a larger plan to construct at least another 1,400 units in the settlement.

- On 26 June 2009, a declaration was issued regarding the intention to expropriate another 2 per cent of West Bank land, amounting to more than 138,000 dunums (34,600 acres) of Palestinian land in the Jordan Valley area.

- On 23 June 2009, it was revealed that the Israeli Defense Minister had approved the construction of 300 new units in the "Talmon" settlement.

- On 10 June 2009, 100 demolition orders were served to Palestinian families in the Al-Bustan neighbourhood of Occupied East Jerusalem, leading to violent clashes between the occupying forces and the neighbourhood's residents who were protesting the demolition orders.

- On 5 June 2009, Israeli occupying forces killed a Palestinian man, Yousef Aqil Srour, aged 35, when they opened fire on a demonstration by civilians against the continuing construction of the Wall in the village of Ni'lin, where weekly

protests have been held against Israel's confiscation of Palestinian land and its construction of the Wall in the village in deviation of the 1967 Green Line. Several Palestinians have been killed by the occupying forces, and dozens of people, including international peace activists, have been injured, many critically, in similar protests against the Wall.

- On 3 June 2009, a group of Israeli settlers set fire to Palestinian fields in an area in the northern West Bank, destroying at least 30 olive trees, an essential source of income and agricultural product for Palestinian families.

- On 28 May 2009, it was reported that leading rabbis linked to the Israeli settlement movement had issued calls upon soldiers in the occupying forces to disobey any orders to evacuate and dismantle "outposts".

- Also on 28 May 2009, a group of Israeli settlers attacked two elderly Palestinian farmers, Abdallah Waradat, aged 82, and Hammad Waradat, aged 75, in Beit Ummar, near the city of Al-Khalil (Hebron), as they were farming their groves.

In addition to such unlawful activities, the occupying Power continues its imposition of more than 600 checkpoints and obstacles to the movement of persons and goods throughout the West Bank, causing daily damage to the Palestinian socio-economic situation and causing daily humiliation and suffering for the Palestinian civilian population, whose freedom of movement, in addition to numerous other freedoms, is being egregiously violated by these unlawful, racist and arbitrary restrictions.

Further to all our aware, such restrictions on the freedom of movement have reached alarming levels with Israel's continuing illegal and totally inhumane blockade of the Gaza Strip, which is being imposed in collective punishment of the entire Palestinian civilian population and in contradiction to all norms and rules of international law and human decency. Continuation of this siege has deepened the poverty, misery and misery being endured by the Palestinian people and has precluded any reconstruction from the devastation wrought upon Gaza by Israel's recent military aggression earlier this year.

The international community's prolonged failure to uphold the rule of law vis-à-vis Israel has clearly created a permissive environment that has led only to more violations, under the perception that its crimes will continue to be unpunished. Tangible, practical and serious measures by the international community are necessary to address this unending cycle of Israeli violations.

A complete and permanent cessation of settlement activities is imperative. A complete lifting of the blockade against the Gaza Strip is imperative. A complete end to all Israeli violations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, is imperative. Urgent and swift action by the international community, including the Security Council, is thus required, consistent with the responsibility to uphold the Charter, international law, including humanitarian and human rights law, and United Nations resolutions, in order to bring the occupying Power into compliance with its legal obligations, ensure the protection of the Palestinian civilian population, and ultimately promote the achievement of peace and security.

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(Signed) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations